1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9



inches in diameter, was hacked out. The piece of wood was brought back to the settlement and the whole morning was spent in hacking it down to the proper size. First a cutlass was used, then a wooden-handled knife. A series of hacks or cuts about one-half inch apart was made along the surfaces to be reduced. Then the wood was reduced by a shaving motion of the blade. The afternoon was spent in smoothing down the wood to an oval shape. For this purpose the edge of the knife was used as a scraper, as well as an old cassava grater. Great care was spent in getting the proper taper, and the balance and resiliency of the bow were tested by frequent flexions. Then the ends were determined, with due regard to symmetry, and the pegs whittled at the head and foot. The next morning was spent in making the groove in the back with a broken piece of mirror glass. Then the bow was smoothed all over with a purumo leaf, which is rough and approximates the action of sand paper. Following this the bow was taken down to the creek and placed in the water, where it was left for three days to be seasoned. On the fourth day it was removed and rubbed all over with aporokune gum, which is said to toughen it as well as improve its appearance. Then it was strung.[1]

The bow string is made of the fibre of the kraua grass, (*Bromelia* sp.) which is specially cultivated in the fields for this purpose. The long semi-stiff leaves are shredded through a loop of string attached to a post of the house, as described by Roth[2]. The fibre is then spun into three-twine string by rolling it on the thigh.

Arrows are of several types, but each consists of the following parts (Plate 3, *b*). The head (piatura) is, in these days, made of an old piece of iron, usually a discarded cutlass filed down to the proper shape, or of wood. The epuru is the small piece of wood into which the base of the head is set; on harpoon types the epuru end is pointed and fits into a socket at the base of the head; it is usually made of wawkonse wood. The epuru is set into the end of the hollow shaft (*mapuru*), which is made from a reed-like plant cultivated in the fields for this purpose and called by the Caribs mapuru epui (*Gynerium saccharoides*). The shaft is usually split in receiving the epuru and must be bound around with fine kraua

[1] Bow, urapa; head, apono; foot, opinyoni natari; bow string, urapa amoti; strengthening string, shyatumamoti.

[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs of the Guiana Indians*, p. 114.

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9



## BASKETRY AND PLAITING

285 462 ALL basketry and plaiting is done by the men, and it is perhaps in this department of material culture that the most aesthetically pleasing products of Carib handiwork are produced.

● 314 824 Nibi, a slender bush-rope, and mokru, a reed-like plant which grows in the jungle, provide the principal materials for basketry and plaiting. Nibi (*Carludovica*) is a vine about as large in diameter 285 as a lead pencil. For use in plaiting it is first split in half; then the convex outer surface is split off from each piece, producing a flat, ribbon-like strip, which is at the same time pliable and tough. This strip is then scraped with a knife. The preparation of the mokru (*Ischnosiphon* sp.) is not unlike that described by Roth.[1]

285 412 415 Articles made of basketry or plait-work are the following: fans, sifters for cassava meal (Plate 8, *a*), trays (Plate 22, *b*), cassava squeezers, (Plate 9, *a*) walishas or carrying baskets (Plate 22, *a*), wallets (Plate 9, *a*), pegalls or clothing containers, quakes or general utility openwork baskets. Fiber trusses are also sometimes attached to pots to facilitate their handling.

285 531 Fans are of the design and type of manufacture illustrated and described by Roth.[2] Sifters are usually of the type figured by Roth.[3] The simple diagonal design is produced by twilled weaving. Also a twilled design is produced giving the effect of a series of concentric squares with their corners pointing toward the middle of each side of the sifter. This type is known as the "turtle-back" design, the squares resembling the markings on the shell of the bush turtle. Other designs are produced by using artificially colored elements in the weaving, usually red and black. The entire surface of the sifter may be divided into four quarters by a cross of red or of black. Another design consists of a series of evenly spaced red dots over the entire surface, produced by the use of a red element. The weaving technique used in all cases is twill. The framework of the sifter is usually of yarriyarri. The basketry is attached to the frame as in Roth (Plate 21, *b*).[4]

415 285 531 Trays are used mainly as containers for raw cotton which is being spun. Occasionally cassava meal and other loose articles

[1] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 137.
[2] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, p. 296.
[3] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 71, A.
[4] Roth, 1924, *An Introductory Study of the Arts, Crafts, and Customs*, Plate 70, B.